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The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Security Council
Sixty-second year

Letter dated 22 February 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit to you the text of an appeal of refugees from Khojaly to the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the Khojaly genocide (see annex).

On the night of 25 to 26 February 1992, as a result of a horrible crime perpetrated by the Armenian armed forces, the town of Khojaly was burned to the ground. A total of 613 people, including 106 women, 63 children and 70 elderly men were mercilessly killed, 1,275 people were taken hostage, while the fate of over 150 others remains unknown.

The remaining residents of Khojaly, who suffered one of the most terrible acts of genocide of the twentieth century, are still convinced that the world community, including the United Nations, will condemn the Armenian military aggression and assist in the restoration of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the return of more than 1 million refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 17 and 27, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Agshin **Mehdiyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 22 February 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Appeal of refugees from Khojaly to the Organization of the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the Khojaly genocide

We, the witnesses of the Khojaly genocide committed in February 1992 in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan, who miraculously survived the tragedy, once more appeal with high hope to the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and to all the civilized world community, and call for the necessity of rendering a legal and political assessment to the Khojaly genocide.

In order to realize their plan of creating "Great Armenia", Armenians, who built a monument in 1978 on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of their migration to Azerbaijan from Iran, pursued a consistent policy of aggression against Azerbaijan in the last two centuries with the assistance of their foreign accomplices and committed such crimes against humanity as terrorism, homicide, deportation and genocide.

Numerous historical documents prove that the millions of Azerbaijanis suffering ethnic cleansing and genocide in the periods 1905-1907, 1918-1920 and 1948-1953 in their historical ethnic territories were murdered en masse or obliged to flee from their native lands.

Finally, Armenian separatism and groundless territorial claims against Azerbaijan were raised again in 1998 and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict started. During 1988-1989, 250,000 Azerbaijanis, to the last man, were deported from their historical ethnic territories in Armenia, with hundreds of civilians brutally killed in the process. Consequently, Armenia became a mono-ethnic country, which was a long-cherished dream of Armenians.

Unfortunately, the former Soviet leadership and the civilized world remained indifferent to the groundless Nagorno-Karabakh conflict that started in 1988, the barbarity of Armenians and the torment of Azerbaijanis. Encouraged by this indifference, Armenians succeeded in committing bloody crimes one after another in Azerbaijan. Twenty per cent of the territory of Azerbaijan, including seven regions around Nagorno-Karabakh, was occupied by Armenian armed forces, more than 1 million Azerbaijanis expelled from native lands, tens of thousands of people killed, disabled or taken hostage. Hundreds of settlements, thousands of houses, education and health institutions, historical-cultural monuments, museums, mosques, temples and cemeteries were destroyed, once more proving Armenian vandalism.

At the beginning of the 1990s, mass slaughter committed by Armenian armed troops against the Azerbaijani population of Karabakh in the villages of Kerkijahan, Mesheli, Koushchular, Karadaghly and Aghdaban, terrorist acts in Baku and other cities, and finally the Khojaly genocide are historical stigma of "suffering and miserable" Armenians.

We bring with regret to the attention of the world community that the Khojaly genocide was another link in the chain of great human calamities of the twentieth century such as Khatyn, Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Songmi.

On 26 February 1992, Armenian armed forces, with the direct participation of the 366th Motorized Infantry Regiment of the former Soviet Union located in Khankendi (Stepanakert), attacked Khojaly city (where 7,000 Azerbaijanis were living) from five directions. At that very time, 3,000 people remained in the town. Armenians had been keeping Khojaly under complete siege for the previous four months. The population was in need of food and medicine. There were a number of sick, wounded, aged men, women and children in the town.

Armenians razed to the ground and burned the town by means of the heavy military equipment of the 366th Regiment. Innocent civilians were murdered, with children, women, the elderly and sick being subject to awful torture and mutilation. Armenians committed a very grave historical crime — the Khojaly genocide against the Azerbaijanis at the end of the twentieth century before the eyes of civilized humankind. The aim of this action was the homicide of Khojaly residents. The majority of the residents remained alive only by accident to witness the tragedy.

As a result of this genocide, 613 peaceful residents were murdered and 1,275 taken hostage. The fate of 150 of them is still unknown. More than 1,000 people were disabled by bullet wounds; 83 children, 106 women and 70 elderly people were among the killed; and 78 of the mutilated were minor boys and girls.

As a result of this military-political crime, six families were murdered to the last man, 25 children lost both parents and 130 children lost one parent; 56 men were either burned alive, scalped, tortured, beheaded or blinded, and pregnant women were bayoneted.

It is difficult to believe that this brutality and savageness, without any match in history, was committed by human beings at the end of the twentieth century before the eyes of humankind. But humanity should be aware that the perpetrators of this crime committed against not only Azerbaijanis, but the whole of mankind, are "suffering and miserable" Armenians.

For 15 years, we, the residents of Khojaly, have been living the life of refugees. We appeal to all peaceful peoples and international organizations of the world with heartache mixed with high hope. We do not believe that such authoritative organizations as the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as well as powerful nations are incapable of bringing Armenia, a State which defies international law and human values, to justice and to respect civilized relations between States.

The non-fulfilment of four resolutions of the Security Council of the United Nations on the unconditional withdrawal of Armenian troops from the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan damages the image of this Organization.

We are convinced that the world community, condemning the military aggression of Azerbaijan by Armenia, will assist in the restoration of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, the return of more than 1 million refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes and the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh fairly and in a peaceful manner.

The appeal was adopted at the general gathering of refugees from Khojaly, held in Baku on 19 February 2007.